

R E A S O N S

HUMBLY OFFERED

TO THE

CONSIDERATION

OF THE

High Court of PARLIAMENT

BY THE

Drapers, Mersers, Haberdashers, Grocers, Hofiers, and other Trading House-keepers of this Nation, of the great Decay of their Trades.

That there are a sort of People called by the Name of *Pedlars, Hawkers, and Petty-Chapmen*, who, Contrary to Law, do Carry about, Dispose and Sell in all the Cities, Towns, Villages, and Hamlets of this Kingdome, very great Quantities of several sorts of Goods and Commodities belonging to the said Trades, to the Ruine and Destruction of the said Tradesmen, and to the great Inconvenience and Danger of the Whole Nation in General, in these Particulars following; *Viz.*

I.



II.

III.

IV.

V.

THAT the said *Hawkers and Pedlars* are Computed, and Boast themselves to be neer 18000 Persons, who are most of them Single, Lusty, and Able of Body either to Serve His Majesty, or to get their Livings by Lawful Wayes, and do notwithstanding Trade in all places, and go about to all Noblemen's, and Gentlemen's Houses to Vend their Commodities, to the Destruction of the Shop-keepers in the Adjoyning Towns; who are made hereby incapable to discharge their Debts and Obligations to the Merchants and others that Trust them.

THAT in Vain it will be for Gentlemen, or others, to breed up any of their Sons to Trades, giving Great Sums of Money, and Long Service, if every Vagrant and Pedlar shall have this Permission.

THAT 'tis impossible for Persons so Chargeably Educated, Liable to all Taxes, Paying great Rents, having Families and Children, to support a Livelyhood, if These be permitted their Employ.

THAT Most of them pay neither Scot nor Lot, Taxes, Rent, or any other Charge; So that of an unavoidable Necessity, they must be Destructive to those that lie under those Performances.

THAT they Multiply daily, and have within few Years Trebled their Number; Arriving to that unsufferable Practice, as to take Servants, Contract for Years, some Retaining three or four a piece, which must of Necessity be as a Cancer to Eat out the Life of Trade.

VI. THAT 'tis the Earnest Desire of the Tradesmen of this Nation, the Legal putting down these Men, as Groaning under the Burden caused by them; There being many Families Ruined, their Wives and Children Begging in a Deplorable Condition, having had their Bread taken out of their Mouths.

VII. THAT supposing but 15000, a Number far less than they boast themselves to be, and every one Selling but a 100 pound worth of Goods in the Year, a Sum much too moderate, will amount in the whole to 1500000 *l.* the Moderate Profit of which, will Maintain 3750 Families, allowing 40 *l.* per Annum to the Maintenance of every Family.

VIII. THAT the greatest part of these People are no Real Natives, but most of another Nation; whose great Encouragements are such, that they daily Flock from their own Country into Ours, only to follow this Trade.

IX. THAT this growing Enormity was in its bud seen, so that in the Reigns of Queen *Mary*, Queen *Elizabeth*, and King *James*, were three Acts made for the suppressing them; and by Law look'd on as Vagrants; but since our unhappy Domestick War, they have arrived to this prodigious Number.

X. THAT 'tis really destructive to the Interest and Government of this Land, as well as Trade, to suffer such a number, who under all disguises may take this Employ, as knowing every place, strength, and ways thereof; so as several Inconveniences may accrew to the disturbance of this Nation, some of them wearing Swords already in defiance of Authority, as also the increase of Robbers, breaking open of Houses, or any other mischief whatsoever.

XI. THAT in some by-Ports of this Nation, several Persons are induced to bring in many prohibited Commodities, to the ruining of many Handicrafts-men, as having an opportunity of selling them by these Men; as also in these places stealing His Majesties Customs, by which clandestine ways they many times have great advantage above the Shop-keepers, who are regulated by His Majesties Laws.

XII. THAT it is very Infamous, as well as Detrimental, to have the Trade of so Eminent a Nation as ours, carried and bandied at the Backs of a loose and vagrant sort of People; most of them without House or being, and begging, if not stealing, in most places where they come.

XIII. THAT under pretence of selling *Scotch-cloth*, a Linnen so inconsiderable, that 'tis rationally supposed not 20000 *l.* worth is made in the Year, there is near two Millions of other Forein Goods sold; so that by the same Argument, might *Dutch, Germans, and French*, dispose of their Commodities in the same manner, to the utter destruction of all Trading Natives whatsoever.

XIV. THAT no true Conveniencies can be proposed for the tolerating these Men, either to State or Trade; the one receiving daily a great detriment, by the irregular Addition of so great a Number; the other no convenience at all, but the contrary: their wandring lives fixing them in no payments, which very consideration doth daily make them increase, and will in time bring the most considerable part of the Taxes on the Gentry. There being in most Corporations, Tradesmen breaking, Rents falling; so that 'tis very difficult for Gentlemen or others, to place their Sons to any Trade or employ, that is not Invaded by them.

XV. THAT whereas 'tis supposed they sell cheaper than Tradesmen, 'tis at best but a vulgar error, unless some things that sinistery comes to their hands, by way of defrauding His Majesties Customs; otherwise taking all opportunities by false Measures, as a Yard when it should be an Ell; by altering & false naming their Commodities, do to the utmost of their powers fraudulently deceive His Majesties honest, & well-meaning Subjects.

XVI. THAT as by a very moderate Computation 3740 Families are every year disfurnished of a maintenance, they all paying Scot and Lot; what sad Inconveniency will accrew in some farther Race of Time, there being already a want of People in most Towns and Villages of this Kingdome.

XVII. THAT 'tis to be highly feared, such a number of young, lusty, vagrant People, increasing as they do, knowing once their strength, who can meet in any part of this Nation, in three Weeks time, (may at last grow like the Bandities of *Italy*;) Out-laws, bidding defiance to Law and Government: (it being against all Safety and Rules of Policy) to indulge those who are no way beneficial to King nor Country.

XVIII. THAT this Nation doth abound with a Multitude of Poor, who by Parish Duties are maintained; so that 'tis conceived, no less than 100000 Persons are thereby kept, a burden no way contributed too, by *Pedlars, Hawkers, wanderers, &c.* But wholly lyes on the Gentry, Tradesmen, and Corporations; so that without some redress, they will not be able any longer to support the Poores necessities; which will be to the ruine, and perishing, of many thousand Souls, who are now relieved by them.